

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A method for client-side management of communications channels, the method comprising:  
determining a maximum number of simultaneous connections  $N$  supportable by a client;  
identifying between one and  $N$  entities that meet a predefined criterion;  
granting permission to the identified entities to communicate with the client; and  
revoking permission to communicate with the client held by entities that are not among the identified entities.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein determining  $N$  includes identifying a connection speed of the client to a network.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein determining  $N$  further includes identifying a processor speed of a central processing unit within the client.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein granting permission to the identified entities includes sending a permission message from the client to each of the identified entities.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein revoking permission includes sending a revocation message from the client to each of the entities that are not among the identified entities.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein the predefined criterion is distance based.
7. The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
determining whether the client has received permission from each of the identified entities to communicate with each entity; and

if permission has not been received from one of the identified entities, identifying between one and N entities that meet the predefined criterion, wherein the identifying excludes the previously identified entity from which permission has not been received.

8. A method for client-side management of communications channels in a virtual world having a plurality of avatars, the method comprising:

calculating a maximum number of simultaneous connections N;  
identifying up to N avatars that are closest to an avatar representing the client; and  
sending a permission grant message to each of the identified avatars, wherein the permission grant message enables each identified avatar to establish a communication channel with the client.

9. The method of claim 8 further comprising:  
determining, by the client, if each of the identified avatars has permission prior to sending the permission grant message; and  
sending the permission grant message only if one or more of the identified avatars do not have permission.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein the determining includes checking a permission table stored on a memory accessible to the client.

11. The method of claim 8 further comprising:  
determining whether permission has been received from each of the identified avatars to communicate with the respective avatar; and  
if permission has not been received from one of the identified avatars, identifying up to N avatars that are closest to the avatar representing the client, wherein the identifying excludes the previously identified avatar from which permission has not been received.

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising identifying the avatar from which permission has not been received.

13. The method of claim 11 further comprising revoking a permission grant message sent to the avatar from which permission has not been received.

14. The method of claim 8 further comprising sending a permission revocation message to any avatar having permission that is not among the identified avatars.

15. A system for client-side management of communication channels in a virtual world, the system comprising:

- a first computer configured to control a first avatar in the virtual world;
- a second computer configured to control a second avatar in the virtual world; and
- a plurality of software instructions for execution by the first computer, the instructions including instructions for:

- calculating, by the first computer, a maximum number of simultaneous connections  $N$ ;

- identifying, by the first computer, up to  $N$  avatars that are closest in proximity to the first avatar, wherein the second avatar is identified among the  $N$  avatars; and

- sending, by the first computer, a permission grant message to the second computer to enable the second computer to establish a communication channel with the first computer.

16. The system of claim 15 further comprising instructions for execution by the second computer, the instructions including instructions for:

- calculating, by the second computer, a maximum number of simultaneous connections  $N$ ;

- identifying, by the second computer, up to  $N$  avatars that are closest in proximity to the second avatar, wherein the first avatar is identified among the  $N$  avatars; and

- sending, by the second computer, a permission grant message to the first computer.

17. The method of claim 15 further comprising instructions for sending, by the first computer, a permission revocation message to any computer corresponding to an avatar that is not among the identified avatars.

18. A computer readable medium containing a plurality of computer executable instructions for execution on a client computer, the instructions for:

determining a maximum number of simultaneous connections N supportable by the client computer;

identifying between one and N entities that meet a predefined criterion;

sending a permission message from the client computer to each of the identified entities, wherein the permission message indicates that the entity can establish a communication channel with the client computer; and

sending a revocation message from the client computer to each of the entities that are not among the identified entities, wherein the revocation message indicates that the entity can no longer communicate with the client computer.

19. The method of claim 18 further comprising instructions for:  
determining whether the client computer has received permission from each of the identified entities to communicate with each entity; and

if permission has not been received from one of the identified entities, identifying between one and N entities that meet the predefined criterion, wherein the identifying excludes the previously identified entity from which permission has not been received.

20. The method of claim 19 further comprising instructions for maintaining a permission table on the client computer, wherein the permission table associates each identified entity with a first indicator representing whether a permission message has been sent by the client computer and a second indicator representing that a permission message has been received by the client computer.